

Spirit of the Age.

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No. 20.

WAR NEWS!

From the Fayetteville Observer.

From the North Carolina Soldiers.

BELOW KINSTON, Dec'r 25.

GENTLEMEN:—I have just returned from a survey of the Yankee side of the battle field at White Hall, in the county of Wayne. I give you the benefit of my observations, not so much in the character of news—for you have long since heard of it—as the historical interest which belongs to every struggle on our soil. In doing this I mean not to disparage the importance of the engagement at Kinston or Goldsboro', far from it; considering the disparity of numbers, the thorough appointment and equipment of the Yankee army, the little time afforded us for meeting it, our men did well and bravely, and it is certain Gen. Foster took little by the motion. I speak of the battle at White Hall because I am more familiar with its details, and what I say is every way reliable.

On the evening of the 15th Dec'r Brig. Gen. Robertson was ordered by General Evans to proceed from Mosely Hall, on the Atlantic Road above Kinston, to White Hall, to burn the bridge across the Neuse at that point and dispute the passage of the enemy; to protect the right of Gen. Evans then falling back from Kinston and resting on Falling creek. The mission was an important one. With this view Col. Leventhorpe's 11th N. C. Reg't, portions of Col. P. G. Evans' and Col. Ferebee's Reg'ts, the 31st N. C. Reg't (Col. Jordan) and a section of Artillery (from Moore's Battalion) under Lt. McCleese, were posted, on the North bank of the Neuse, and scarcely had the torch been applied to the bridge when the enemy's cavalry appeared and his artillery commenced shelling the woods and firing into a gunboat then in process of construction. Several of the Yankees took off their clothes and attempted to swim, but were driven back by our sharpshooters. From the force displayed, in the opinion of Gen. Robertson, it was the evident design of the enemy to cross this bridge with the double purpose of flanking Gen. Evans and taking Goldsboro' in the rear, which was prevented by the timely and prompt action of Gen. R.'s command.

About 9 A. M. of the 16th, a brisk picket fire commenced and the 31st Reg't and the artillery were posted as favorably as the ground would permit, and the latter ordered to fire both solid shot and shell. Owing to the narrowness of the enemy's front, Leventhorpe's Reg't and the portions of Evans' and Ferebee's Reg'ts were held in reserve, as no more could then be actively engaged. The enemy occupied a range of hills overlooking the low grounds of the Neuse and had the advantage of position, and from not less than 24 pieces, judging from the positions of the guns as they appeared after the fight, poured into the 31st Reg't a fire so terrible that the 11th, Col. Leventhorpe, was ordered up, held their ground for 5 hours, and won for themselves the well merited compliment of Gen. Robertson, that "no veteran soldiers ever fought better or inflicted more terrible loss on an enemy, considering the numbers engaged." Three times they drove the yankee cannoneers from their guns and as often prevented their infantry from forming in their front. Finally they held their ground until, despite their numbers, the enemy left the field, with a loss of 126 killed and many wounded, besides artillery horses, of which as many as 18 were left dead upon the field. The reserves of Cois. Evans and Ferebee were exposed to a fire which officers familiar with such scenes at Manassas and before Richmond pronounced the most terrific they had ever known, converging, as it was, from all parts of the field upon the narrow bounds of our position. Our loss was only 10 killed and 42 wounded.

In our ride over the field it required no garrulous cicero to direct our steps,—the empty ammunition chests, dead horses, pools of blood, and hard by the new made graves of the foe, sufficiently attested the accuracy of our shots and the persistent daring of our men. Cruel and revengeful as the Yankees is towards us, they are scarcely more considerate of their own men. Into shallow trenches they pack their dead, like sardines, head and heels alternately, with scarcely earth enough to hide their mangled forms.

Gen. Foster thought we had at White Hall 18 or 20 pieces of artillery, so he told my informant; we had only two six pounders, but they were served with energy and deadly effect.

The officers and men all speak in terms of high regard of Gen. R. for his coolness and encouraging presence at all points of the field. He had the reputation of being one of the best drill officers in the old army and his appointment to Ashby's command showed in what estimation our au-

thorities held him. He expressed himself in high terms of his command, and hope their efficiency will be a source of congratulation both to themselves and the country.

The young man who fired the bridge at Goldsboro' was J. Duncan Graham of Virginia—his father is a native of Va. his mother a northern woman. Gen. Foster has rewarded his treason by placing him on his staff; he was personally known to several of Gen. Robertson's staff and is now airing himself about Newbern as the Hero of the War.

I have a yankee breast plate of sheet iron warranted to resist a pistol shot at 15 yds—this I desire to exhibit as one of the hundred life assurances of this vindictive and cowardly race. Hastily yours,

PORTFOLIO.

IN CAMP NEAR GOLDSBORO', Dec. 21.

The enemy were first attacked by the 52d N. C. T. (Col. Marshall) at the Railroad Bridge, but they were unable to sustain themselves against the enemy's large force of artillery, we having none on that side of the river at that time. The 52d fell back upon the river bank towards the county bridge and were unfortunately mistaken by a company of the 51st for the enemy attempting to flank them—supposing that the 52d had fallen back over the railroad bridge. The mistake caused some confusion and both reg'ts fell back and formed on the 8th at the county bridge; and the 8th, 51st and 52d were immediately ordered by Gen. Clingman to cross the bridge, and did so in the order named.

The infantry force soon re-crossed the bridge and the 51st and 52d fired a few rounds into the enemy and drove them from the railroad. These two were the only reg'ts that had an opportunity of firing, and then with the 23d S. C. T. soon after charged for several hundred yards beyond the railroad, where the principal loss was sustained. While this charge was being made one piece of Starr's Artillery under Lieut. T. C. Fuller on our right (supported by 8th and 61st reg'ts N. C. T.) was the only artillery we had engaged against that of the enemy's. The piece was well managed and it is to be regretted that we did not have sufficient artillery to compete with that of the enemy; as it was we held the field until the enemy retired after dark.

G. S.

MALLET'S BATTALION AT KINSTON.—We are kindly permitted to copy the following from a letter received by a lady in this place from her brother, an officer in the battalion, who has been in the service since the commencement of the war, has shared in many battles and always with high distinction:

CAMP HOLMES, Dec. 21.

I am still in the land of the living, though I cannot say that the "smell of fire" has not passed upon my garments," for I was thrown into the fire upon the burning bridge. Thanks to a very wet and muddy pair of boots, I escaped a scorching.

We arrived at Kinston on Sunday morning about 7 o'clock and were immediately placed in position in the rifle pits commanding the bridge, supporting a battery placed there for the same purpose. In a short time the fighting commenced on the other side of the river. Our men were in splendid spirits and were prepared to obey with alacrity the order to move forward across the bridge at a double quick. As soon as we had crossed we were met by Gen. Evans who ordered us to pass through some open fields upon our right and engage the enemy who were in the woods beyond. You may be assured that I felt great anxiety with regard to the action of our fellows who were in for the first time. The shells were flying thick and fast, and one or two men were struck; but the others held out bravely, and being led forward by their officers, passed through the fields in line of battle until they reached the woods, on the other side of which was a fence, under which they took cover and commenced firing. And here let me call to your mind an old saying, that "appearances are often deceitful." You know our officers had the reputation of being "fancy fellows," and some may have supposed that they would not fight; but it was a great mistake. I tell you any gentleman is obliged to behave well in battle, and they were all gentlemen.

Owing to a misunderstanding there was a temporary break in the battalion for a moment, but they were rallied splendidly and came back in fine order. I noticed Captain Jesse R. McLean bring his company up first with great gallantry, and in a moment the whole line was again in position. We received an order from Gen. Evans to return to the bridge, and again we had to pass through the ordeal of crossing the fields under a heavy fire of artillery. Upon reaching the bridge it became necessary that we should immediately go back to the fence, so that you see that we were pretty well exposed. When we reached the fence a second time we became at once hotly engaged with the enemy, who were pressing hard upon our left—so much so that Capt. John McRae's company had to change position from the right to the left under a very heavy fire. They came down upon us yelling like devils, three regiments (as General Foster said) upon our battalion, but a withering volley drove them back with great loss.

Suddenly our artillery, which had been doing good service on our left, ceased firing and retired, and the infantry followed suit, and the direction of the enemy's musketry showed that we were flanked and about to be surrounded. Then, all of our supports being gone, both infantry and artillery, the enemy pressing upon us on all sides and in

overwhelming numbers, our Colonel with great reluctance ordered us to retire to the bridge. It was a terrible time; every probability of being cut to pieces; our own artillery on the Kinston side playing directly over our heads and many of our own shells bursting around us in the air; the enemy's batteries in full play upon us and their infantry closing in upon us; so you can imagine our dismay upon reaching the bridge and finding it crowded and in flames. Our left companions rushed over, but before the whole battalion could cross the flames had lapped on the other side and the surging mass upon the crazy structure was pressed back pell mell, and a crowd of men were heaped in a pile upon the bridge. Several were burned to death; some jumped in the river. I was pressed in the fire and held there for a moment, but thanks to my wet and muddy boots and a desperate effort, I got out unhurt.

The enemy were now immediately upon us, firing volley after volley from all sides. Our own men from the other side of the river were firing upon us, and the scene was indescribably awful.

Col. Mallett here received a wound and was bleeding fast. Lieut. Reid, commanding Co. A, was instantly killed by a ball through the heart. Poor fellow! he acted very gallantly and died like a soldier. He leaves a young wife.

There were left about seventy-five men on that side of the river, who continued to fire upon the advancing swarms of the enemy until their ammunition was about exhausted. Col. Mallett's successor in command, seeing no possible chance to get them off, and being anxious to save their lives, surrendered them. I will give you my experiences with the abolitionists another time. Suffice it to say, that except by a few ruffians we were treated well and have all safely arrived within our lines.

We are all more than satisfied with our Colonel; a braver man never lived. We are only anxious that he may soon be in condition to give us our revenge.

THE 52d REGIMENT.—Dr. Foulkes sums up the casualties as follows: killed 9, wounded 47, missing 13, of whom 10 were taken prisoners and have been paroled. 13 others received mere scratches or bruises, not incapacitating them from duty. The Doctor adds that the 52d and 51st regiments all had narrow escapes, but were uninjured; that this regiment opened the fight at Goldsboro', sustaining the heaviest attack of the enemy, and but for a protecting Providence must have been almost annihilated.

From the Western Democrat.

The Fredericksburg Battles.

CAMP, 4 MILES FROM FREDERICKSBURG, Va., Dec. 17.

W. J. YATES—SIR: The 48th N. C. Regiment has again been engaged in battle and has suffered severely, having lost 17 killed, 3 mortally wounded, and about 190 wounded, some of them severely.

We were ordered from this camp to the town of Fredericksburg on the 11th, and found the enemy attempting to throw pontoon bridges over the river in front of town. They were repulsed at first by Barksdale's Mississippi Brigade, but succeeded in crossing on the evening of the 11th. Longstreet's corps, to which Cook's Brigade of North Carolinians belong, occupied the left and centre of our lines—Ransom's Division was on the extreme left, with Cook's brigade in front in his division. We felt sure the enemy would make the attack on the 12th, but it was not made until the 13th at about 1 o'clock, P. M., at which time the 27th, 48th, 46th and 15th N. C. Regiments were ordered forward, and the gallant boys moved forward like a Grecian phalanx without a waver. The 15th, that well tried regiment, under the gallant Col. McRae, was on the extreme left of Cook's Brigade; next came the glorious 48th, who have been tried so effectually at Richmond and Sharpsburg, under Lieut. Col. Saml. H. Walkup; then the 46th, under Col. Hall, and the 27th, under Col. Gilmer. They all marched up under a storm of shell and musketry. The 48th, of whom I more particularly write, took a position on a height close to the left of the Washington Battery and overlooking the position of the enemy in a railroad cut below, from which they received and returned a most galling and destructive fire. The enemy were driven from their position three times, but again receiving large reinforcements returned to the charge and were again repulsed. One incessant storm of shot and shell rained down on the devoted 48th from soon after one o'clock until dark, and still they withstood the destructive peltings of that pitiless storm for five awful hours of death and carnage, unblanched with fear and unwavering, hurling back defiance and death upon their assailants. They continued the fire until nearly every man had shot 60 rounds of cartridges, and many of the officers and men fired over 100 rounds, and when their guns were too much choked to load they would deliberately wipe them out and begin the fire anew. They held their post until darkness put an end to the conflict. Our loss was seventeen killed on the field, three mortally wounded and who died that night, and one hundred and ninety wounded, to the latter of which may be added Lieut. Col. Walkup, who was slightly wounded

on the right hip, and Maj. A. A. Hill severely wounded in the right shoulder—both of whom, however, remained on duty until the close of the fight, and the former is still on duty.

In Co. A, commanded by Capt. Turner, two were killed outright, viz: O. Thomas and J. P. Presson, and Jack P. Phillips mortally wounded, since dead. Wm. B. May had his arm since amputated. In all 28 of the company were wounded—most of them slightly.

In Co. F, commanded by Lieut. Hugh A. Gray (Lieut. B. F. Richardson being absent sick) there were 3 killed, viz: Sergt. C. B. McGinnis, Danl. Harkey and Jas. Vickery. Sergt. E. Simpson was mortally wounded and died that night. He was a noble fellow and his death, as well as the others, is much regretted. Lieut. Hugh A. Gray was severely wounded in the shoulder, and Sergt. Wm. D. Howard slightly wounded but still on duty, and Corpl. D. Belk in knee not dangerously, and Corpl. K. R. Gordon slight. R. C. Delany is again wounded in the arm. In all 16 were wounded, most of them slightly.

In Co. I, commanded by Capt. John E. Moore, two were killed, viz: Sergt. J. A. Long and B. S. Beaty. Lieut. Sugar Dulin was severely and dangerously wounded in the thigh and his leg has been amputated above the knee. Lieut. W. A. Austin was dangerously wounded in mouth and throat. Bishop Brothers is also dangerously wounded. Total wounded 16.

In Co. E, commanded by Capt. Wm. A. Long, that most amiable man Lieut. Peter W. Plyler was killed, also J. A. Rogers. A young and very gallant lad, 16 years old, named Ellison Hays, was wounded in the arm after firing 100 rounds with the coolness of a veteran. There was also an Alvin Parker who behaved with equal coolness and bravery, but he was not hurt. Total wounded 21.

The above mentioned companies were all from Union county. Company C, from Ire-dell, commanded by Lt. J. K. Potts had two killed, viz: W. L. Christy and Jesse Sifford. D. Lent was severely wounded, and Lieut. J. K. Potts and Lieut. J. M. Walker. Total in company C, 18.

The boys generally shot as if at a shooting match for beef, and they generally got it, too, as the piles of dead yankees in front of their lines can testify.

There never was a more severely contested field, or one more heroically maintained during the war. The regiment went into the fight with 387 men and 28 officers, and of that number 212 were killed and wounded, of whom 17 were officers. Two companies, H and K, had all their officers wounded. Our gallant and heroic young General, Cook, was severely wounded above the eye by a minnie ball.

Every one praises Cook's heroic Brigade. The General of the Division was not visible on the battle field during the fight, and his brigade was only partly engaged.

The 15th N. C., under the chivalrous McRae; the 46th, under the cool and intrepid E. D. Hall, and the 27th, under the gallant Col. Gilmer, each proved themselves heroes in whose hands the destinies of the country can be safely trusted where there are not more than three to one against them. The glorious 48th could not be surpassed. It is true that a few left the field with very slight wounds, and others were anxious to aid the wounded off the field, who did not need their benevolent assistance. But very few left until after the fight had closed and the other regiments of their brigade had gone to the rear. Even the snarling and envious tongue of slander cannot darken their proud and glorious fame. ONE OF THE 48TH.

An Appeal to the Benevolent.

On the afternoon of Sunday the 14th, the day after the great victory of our arms at Fredericksburg, Va., while the 54th regiment, N. C. T. were lying upon their arms on the first line of battle, their camp which was about three-fourths of a mile in rear was invaded by bands of stragglers from other regimental camps, and our knapsacks which the soldiers had been required to leave behind on the morning before, were shamefully carried off, or robbed of their contents upon the spot.

Thus have these brave men been stripped, with very few exceptions, of every vestige of clothing except the clothes they wore upon the battlefield on the day before. They are now facing the foe upon the Rappahannock by day and by night, and enduring the severities of a Northern Virginia winter. They are brave men, 'tis true; but in their present condition their exposure to the wintry blasts may be too much for nature to endure. Clothing they should have, and clothing they must have. I, therefore, as Chaplain of the regiment, appeal to the benevolence of every Carolina heart in their behalf, and solicit such aid as you may be able to afford them.

I know the good people of North Carolina have done much during this great crisis, for which Heaven will reward them, and I trust they will not grow weary in the good work. That you may understand the character of the regiment, in order to appreciate its claims upon your sympathies and charity, I lay before you by permission the following congratulatory note from the division commander.

"HEADQUARTERS HOOD'S DIVISION.

December 16th, 1862.

Colonel:—I am directed by the Major General commanding, to express to you,

the officers and men of your regiment, his congratulations upon the gallant and brilliant manner in which you charged the enemy in the battle of Saturday the 13th December, a charge which elicited the admiration of every one who witnessed it.

He bids me say that he can have no fears of the conduct of such troops in any future encounter in which they may be engaged and that he relies confidently upon their amply sustaining the reputation which they have gained in this their maiden effort.

I am, Colonel, very respectfully.

Your obedient servant.

H. B. BLANTON, A. D. C.

To Col. J. C. S. McDowell, commanding 54th regiment N. C. T.

This is the record of the gallant 54th, made on the 13th inst. Every North Carolinian may justly be proud of it. I now call upon the Soldier's Aid Societies, and the benevolent and patriotic citizens generally, of the Old North State, to come to the aid of these brave men. Winter, with its intense cold, is the post of duty and of danger. If they had the means they could not supply their wants. You must do this for them, if done at all. Shirts, drawers, socks, pants, coats, overcoats and blankets, all are needed, and needed now. In whatever neighborhood or community, a package or box of any of these articles can be made up by our good people at home, let the box be sent forward and marked, "Col. J. C. S. McDowell, 54th Regiment, N. C. T., N. C. Depot, Richmond, Va.," and at the same time please direct a note specifying the amount of the contents, the place from whence sent, &c. The address of the note should be, "Col. J. C. S. McDowell, 54th Regiment, N. C. T., Law's Brigade, Hood's Division."

Ladies and gentlemen, my appeal in behalf of your brave but unfortunate soldiers is before you. I know your sympathies are with them. Shall they be relieved? Now for practical responses to the question.

JOHN PAVIS, Chaplain

54th Regiment N. C. T.

Dec. 24th, 1862.

PETERSBURG, Va.,

December 22d, 1862.

MR. EDITOR:—While our army has again stood the shock of battle in Virginia, and our no less patriotic soldiers braved the storm of battle in Eastern N. C., all has been quiet here except that eagerness for news and particulars of the battles which might be expected.

The defeat of the Yankees at Fredericksburg, seems to be the most complete one which they have yet sustained. For such a resolute and determined army as Burnside's was boasted to have, to silently draw off and hastily retreat after a repulse without the least pursuit on our side, shows a defeat disastrous in the highest degree. The latest intelligence places Burnside's forces on Bull Run, and at Dumfries, "evidently moving slowly towards Washington." Thus the army of the Potomac has been hurled back the third time upon the Federal capital, and the high expectations for Gen. Burnside wofully disappointed.

Truly the God of hosts gives us the victory, and when will our brutal foe learn to recognize right and justice, and give over the hellish design of subjugating a free and innocent people.

But more particularly to my subject.—This will inform the friends of the 55th N. C., that we are still on Provost guard in Petersburg. Nothing has transpired recently to alleviate the monotony of our regular routine of duties, except it may be a little undue excitement produced by camp rumors. But you must know that by this time, we have learned, by experience, what credit to give these idle rumors. So we avoid crossing the river before we come to it by passing the rumor by and await the transpiring of the event.

Frequent accessions to the guard house are of daily occurrence; and it seems strange that so many of our soldiers so far disgrace all claims to patriotism, as to act in so ignoble a manner.

We would hope that a noble spirit of freedom worthy of the just cause in which we are engaged should animate our brave defenders.

The health of our Regiment seems on the decline for the few last weeks, which is no doubt attributable to the exposure we have had to endure. For while we have comfortable quarters, it will be remembered that we are on duty at least half our time.

I scarcely know what to say about the religious condition of our regiment. Our Chaplain has not been with us for the last two months, and what little effort has been put forth in the cause of Christ, has been done by members of the regiment. And I am happy to tell you that we have a few praying men in our regiment; would to God they were all such. Were you to steal into our encampment after the last note of tattoo has died away, you